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Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture

For the Report Year ended 30th September, 1940.

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BASUTOLAND

Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture

For the Year ended 30th December, 1941.

DUE to war conditions the Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture has been cut down to an essential minimum.

2. The Report, as in the past, is divided into three divisions :—

(1) Agriculture
(2) Veterinary and Livestock
(3) Anti-Erosion Work

3. In order not to break the continuity of the records of work performed during the previous years, the divisional reports reflect the position for the year 1939–40 in a few short statements and with the necessary figures. As a reference work showing comparative results this Annual Report retains its value for use now and in the future, but the objects aimed at and the methods adopted to secure these have, of necessity, been largely omitted.

4. Throughout the year the attention of the Department has been strongly focussed on food production work. Other essential works in the interests of the country and the people have not only been maintained but pressed forward to the utmost with the staff available. It is fully realized by the Government that the post-war period will present major economic difficulties, and that it is dependent on the action taken now and the work performed whether these will be successfully met. For this reason anti-erosion measures have been continued as our food supplies, now and in the future, are dependent on these, as is also, to a large extent, our livestock industry.

5. Livestock improvement measures continue unabated, and a special effort is being made to increase, as rapidly as possible, the output of classed wool of superior quality. This effort is essential

as a war measure, and especially important if we are to face with equanimity a necessarily very discriminating market after the war ; such market will have little interest in inferior and unclassed wool.

6. As has been shown previously, on many occasions, wheat and wool constitute Basutoland's two major cash export products, and much work has been performed to promote the welfare of these two industries.

7. The object of making Basutoland the principal strong or high protein content wheat producing area in South Africa, has received unremitting attention for the past six years. The best Canadian strong wheats and other wheats introduced have, for a considerable number of years, been severely and extensively tested under varying conditions of altitude, etc., with the result that it was possible in 1939–40 to launch a wholesale campaign for the universal introduction and use of the varieties which had proved suitable.

8. Marquis has been well established for the past four years and other varieties such as Reward, Reliance, Red Bobs, etc., are now taking their place with Marquis.

9. It is regretted that space does not permit of showing, in some detail, the far reaching Five Year Wheat Production and Sales' Plan, which was approved and has now come into operation. The three chief items in the plan are :—

(*a*) Measures to gradually ensure the use of high-class strong wheat seed throughout the territory.
(*b*) Elimination of smut.
(*c*) The elimination of all foreign matter from export wheat.

10. These measures it is hoped will, when in full operation, ensure a safe market for Basutoland wheat in future.

Conclusion.

I desire to record my thanks and appreciation to all those who have supported the work, and particularly to my Staff for their sustained effort and enthusiasm during a difficult year of increased burdens due to war conditions and requirements.

R. W. Thornton,
Director of Agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL DIVISION

PART I

Staff.

European

The Staff remained the same as that of last year except for the appointment on the 8th March, 1940, of Mr. W. G. Leckie, M.B.E., B.SC., to the post of Deputy Director of Agriculture.

Native.

34 Agricultural Demonstrators employed.
There is one vacancy.

Departmental Conference.

The Annual Conference of all members of the Staff was held at Maseru on the 17th and 18th May, 1940.

PART II

Agricultural and Weather Conditions.

The spring prospects for a good agricultural season were most promising, but a dry summer followed which seriously affected the spring sown crops, particularly in the lowlands. Weather conditions were more favourable in the foothills and mountains. A heavy frost on the 8th April finally stopped all growth.

The winter was cold ; up to 20° of frost was registered.

The average rainfall for the territory was 30.72 as against 31.67 for 1938–39.

Report on the Condition of the Chief Agricultural Crops 1939–40.

Lowland crops of wheat, peas, maize and beans were poor, but in the mountain districts better crops of all varieties were obtained.

Incidence of Insects Pests.

No swarms of Brown or Red Winged Locusts invaded the territory.

Considerable damage was done to gardens and fruit by the "Elegant Grasshopper".

Cut worm and the Maize Stalk Borer were responsible for less damage than usual.

ESTIMATES

of Agricultural Production for 1940, and the preceding years.

Crops	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	Remarks
Maize	513,663	491,114	1,135,983	873,750	758,835	691,542	These crop returns are given in bags of 200 lbs
Sorghum	194,498	184,179	297,117	197,812	164,129	139,965	
Wheat	259,331	245,572	383,645	257,812	364,802	398,861	
Peas, Beans & Other Crops	64,833	61,593	148,558	109,218	156,562	133,353	

Agricultural Associations.

During the period under review there were 146 Associations consisting of 35 Men's, 77 Women's and 34 Mixed Associations. The Associations have a combined membership of 4,081.

Markets for Native Produce.

These have been well patronized.

Agricultural Shows.

Agricultural Shows were held at eight centres.

Rodent Destruction.

The general situation is much the same as it was in 1938–39.

Lectures and Demonstrations.

During 1939–40, 204 lectures and demonstrations were given by the Agricultural Officers, and 763 by the Native Agricultural Demonstrators. Meetings were held all over the territory to impress on the Basuto the necessity of increasing their food supply, especially during the period of the war.

Scheme for the Improvement of Wheat and Methods of Sale.

During the year a comprehensive scheme, based on a Five-Year Plan for the Improvement of Wheat and Methods of Sale, was instituted.

The chief objects aimed at under the scheme are :—

(*a*) To produce high protein wheat throughout the country.

(*b*) To eliminate smut.

(*c*) To ensure that all wheat shall leave the country free of foreign matter.

Three major cleaning plants have already been erected by the trading community and are operating at three of the principal ports of exit. The general remarks made on the production of strong wheat in the Annual Report for 1938–39 still apply.

During 1938–39, 313 bags of Marquis wheat were issued, from which a crop of 2,374 bags was harvested. Of this crop, 454 bags were returned for re-issue as seed during 1939–40 in the districts where grown.

A further 414 bags of Marquis were purchased for distribution as seed in the various Demonstration centres throughout the territory. The following wheats grown on the Government Multiplication Fields were also distributed :-- 36 bags Garnet, 31 Red Bobs, 15 Bird Proof, 18 Ceres and 37 Reliance.

Report of the General Agricultural Demonstration Work carried out in the Territory during 1939–40.

The general agricultural demonstration work performed was outstanding. Field competitions were held in each demonstration area for (*a*) the best cultivated fields of spring or autumn sown crops, and (*b*) for the best managed fields for seed production. A sum of £36. 10. 0. was expended as prize money under (*a*), and £4. 10. 0. under (*b*).

The following are the particulars of the demonstration work carried out during the season.

Results of Demonstration Work for the Year 1939–40.

Crop	Demonstration Plots			Native Worked Check Plots		
	No. of Plots	Acreage	No. of Plots	No. of Plots	Acreage	Yield per acre, in bags
Wheat	244	695.95	3.22	254	573.5	1.9
Maize	285	963	4.08	326	966.25	1.71
Sorghum	62	225.25	2.96	72	260.5	1.61
Beans	6	14	3.08	1	2	3
Peas	2	3.5	2.85	1	2	2

Vegetable Gardening and Fruit Culture.

The campaign to encourage the Basuto to grow vegetables and fruit in correctly terraced gardens continues to be most successful.

A free issue of suitable vegetable seeds is made to Native gardeners who have laid out their gardens under Government supervision and who have not had their gardens for more than three years.

The usual competitions for the best gardens were held and an amount of £89. 17. 0. was expended in prize money. There were 3,550 gardens shown in the competitions out of a grand total of 6,001 for the whole territory. There was an increase of 2,002 gardens this season over the total number worked last year.

19,239 Peach trees and 1,285 Vines, raised in the Government Nurseries, were distributed free to Natives owning well managed gardens.

Comparative Manurial Trials — 1939–40.

Manurial trials were carried out by the Agricultural Demonstrators ; the results are given in bags of 200 lbs. The trials were undertaken with maize.

Results for 1939–40.

SUPERPHOSPHATE 19.1%				KRAAL ASH				NO MANURE			
No. of Plots	Acreage	Amount of fertilizer per acre	Bags /acre harvested	No. of Plots	Acreage	Amount of fertilizer per acre	Bags /acre harvested	No. of Plots	Acreage	Amount of fertilizer per acre	Bags /acre harvested
25	41	200 lbs. per acre	5.13	1	1.75	9,000 lbs.	5.02	23	65.75	No manure	1.62

Report on the Government Scheme for the Supply of Superphosphate to Native Farmers at Cost Price.

A total of 1,040 bags of Superphosphate was bought by the Basuto in 1939–40, as against 1,028 the previous season. Very good results were obtained by farmers using Superphosphate for maize and wheat production.

PART III

Financial Statement.

Revenue	*Expenditure*
Nil.	£11,085. 4. 8.

VETERINARY AND LIVESTOCK DIVISION

Staff Changes

The strength of the European Staff remained the same as last year, the only changes being the appointment of Mr. M. R. H. Barry to fill the vacancy created by the death of Mr. P. B. Connellan as Assistant Agricultural and Livestock Officer; the release of Mr. W. S. B. Clapham for military service and the promotion of Mr. G. R. Chalmers to Agricultural and Livestock Officer.

PART I

Review of General Livestock Position.

The year may be regarded as a very successful one. The Livestock Improvement Schemes were pursued with unabated vigour. The results which are now becoming apparent are gratifying.

PART II (*a*)

Main Features of the Department's Work on Disease Control.

Anthrax.

Only one outbreak of Anthrax occurred during the year. Owing to early detection the mortality was confined to three cattle. This is an improvement over the previous year.

Quarter Evil.

This disease is increasing annually and takes a heavy toll of cattle. Fortunately preventive inoculation is becoming more popular. The disease is a decided menace to the Government's Cattle Improvement Scheme.

Internal Parasitism.

The compulsory monthly dosing of small stock under official supervision was continued throughout the year.

"*Blue Tongue*" (*Catarrhal Fever*).

All outbreaks were confined to the lowlands. The mortality was slight. A few farmers resorted to preventive inoculation.

PART II (*b*)

Animal Husbandry.

(1) *Small Stock.*

A census of small stock was taken during the year. The interest taken by sheep farmers in their stock has increased in recent years. This is a sequel to the sheep improvement measures adopted by the Government and has helped the Department's pursuance of these measures considerably. Farmers now realize the value of good stock. A recent survey of the sheep position revealed a vast improvement generally. As a result the production of wool has shown an ascendancy both in quality and quantity.

The Wool Classing Scheme inaugurated by the Government has brought increased prosperity to many wool growers. The Scheme is being gradually widened in scope and greater support is forthcoming annually.

During the year 708 rams were imported for resale to Native farmers making a total of 2,959 rams introduced under the Scheme since 1935.

The poundage of wool classed under official supervision during the year was 383,200 representing an increase over the previous year of 35,760 lbs. The total poundage for the last three years being 981,287. The percentages for the year under review were :—

Combing Wool—33.23 ; Short Wool—20.28 ; X.M.—12.82 ; and Outsorts—33.67

The average price for classed and unclassed wool was :—

Longs—6½*d.* ; Shorts—6*d.* ; Longs—6*d.* ; and Shorts—5½*d.* respectively.

The price of mohair was good and producers derived a good income from the product. The average price for mohair was :—

No. 1—12*d.* per lb. ; No. 2—8¾ per lb.

(2) *Cattle.*

A cattle census was taken during the year. Many scrub bulls were castrated by Officers of the Department. Sixty-three Afrikander bulls were imported by the Government for issue under the Loan Scheme to approved cattle breeders, making a total of 163 bulls introduced since 1938.

(3) *Equines.*

A census of Equines was taken during the year. Many scrub stallions were emasculated by Officers of the Department. Thirteen

thoroughbred stallions and four donkey "Jacks" were imported by the Government for issue under the Loan Scheme to approved horse and mule breeders, making a total of 59 stallions and 36 "Jacks" imported since 1936.

For Livestock Tables see Part (IV).

PART II (*c*)

Marketing of Animals and Animal Products.

During the year 784 Basutoland cattle were sold by public auction under the Livestock Sales Scheme. The majority of these were exported to the Union having been bought chiefly by local Union butchers. The total amount realized was £5,042. 17*s*. 6*d*. The average price was £6. 6*s*. 7¾*d*.

The Bone Sterilizing Plant at Maseru has handled 963,504 lbs. of bones collected in Basutoland for export to the Union. During the year permits covering the export of 20,650 cured hides and 28,145 skins (cured) were issued.

For exports of Wool and Mohair see Part IV.

PART III

New Legislation.

The following legislative measures were introduced during the year :—

(1) Proclamation No. 62 of 1939, entitled "*The Basutoland Sheep and Goats Importation Restriction* (amendment) *Proclamation*, 1939."

(2) High Commissioner's Notice No. 212 of 1939," *prescribing Ports of Entry at which Sheep and Goats shall only enter Basutoland*".

(3) High Commissioner's Notice No. 154 of 1940, "*controlling the Export of Horses to Countries beyond the Borders of the Union of South Africa and Mandated Territory of South West Africa*".

(4) High Commissioner's Notice No. 19 of 1940, "*prescribing the Conditions under which Ox Transport may be utilized between Mokhotlong and Good Hope trading Station in the Province of Natal Via Sani Pass.*"

PART IV.

	Sheep	Goats	Cattle	Horses	Mules	Donkeys
Census	1,597,887	565,554	470,040	88,272	1,111	29,829
Doses administered for Worms	8,258,022	3,399,793	—	2,403	—	—
Castrated by Officers	20,154	6,619	2,229	578	4	406
Treated for external Parasites	78,512	17,185	—	223	—	—
Exported	857	15	5,722	374	6	4
Imported	25,443	605	14,750	3,041	75	707
Wool and Mohair exported in lbs.	8,168,382	925,866	—	—	—	—
Number of Hides and Skins exported	28,145		20,650	—	—	—
Inoculated for Anthrax	—	—	27,938	—	—	—
Inoculated for "Black Leg"	—	—	6,576	—	—	—
Inoculated for Anaplasmosis	—	—	659	—	—	—
Inoculated for Horse-sickness	—	—	—	165	—	—
Services by Government Sires	—	—	1,310	596	—	97

ANTI-SOIL EROSION WORK

Soil conservation work continued on the lines described in previous reports. The year has seen a marked increase in the rate of terrace construction and a satisfactory reduction in costs of construction. The progress in other phases of the work during the year has been satisfactory as is shown in the following figures.

Measure	Previous to 1940	During 1940	Total to end end of 1940
Area terraced .....acres	41,909	20,230	62,139
Length of terrace constructed...yards	4,500,640	2,205,860	6,706,500
Number of dams constructed	64	19	83
Number of trees planted	404,660	101,710	506,370
Area fenced ..... acres	1,590	572	2,162

In addition to the work shown above, 34 grass inlets and 7 meadow strips were established during the year, and over 420,000 yards of terrace bank was sown or planted to valuable grasses.

The amount of water impounded at full supply level by the 19 major dams constructed in 1940, is over 64¾ million gallons.

The mean unit cost of all anti-erosion work completed during the year was 10.86 shillings per acre reclaimed. This figure shows a reduction of approximately 25% on the previous lowest figure for any one year. The reduction in unit cost is due largely to the acquition of additional power plant.

The benefits of the soil conservation work have been more generally realized, with the result that the confidence and support of the bulk of the people have been obtained.